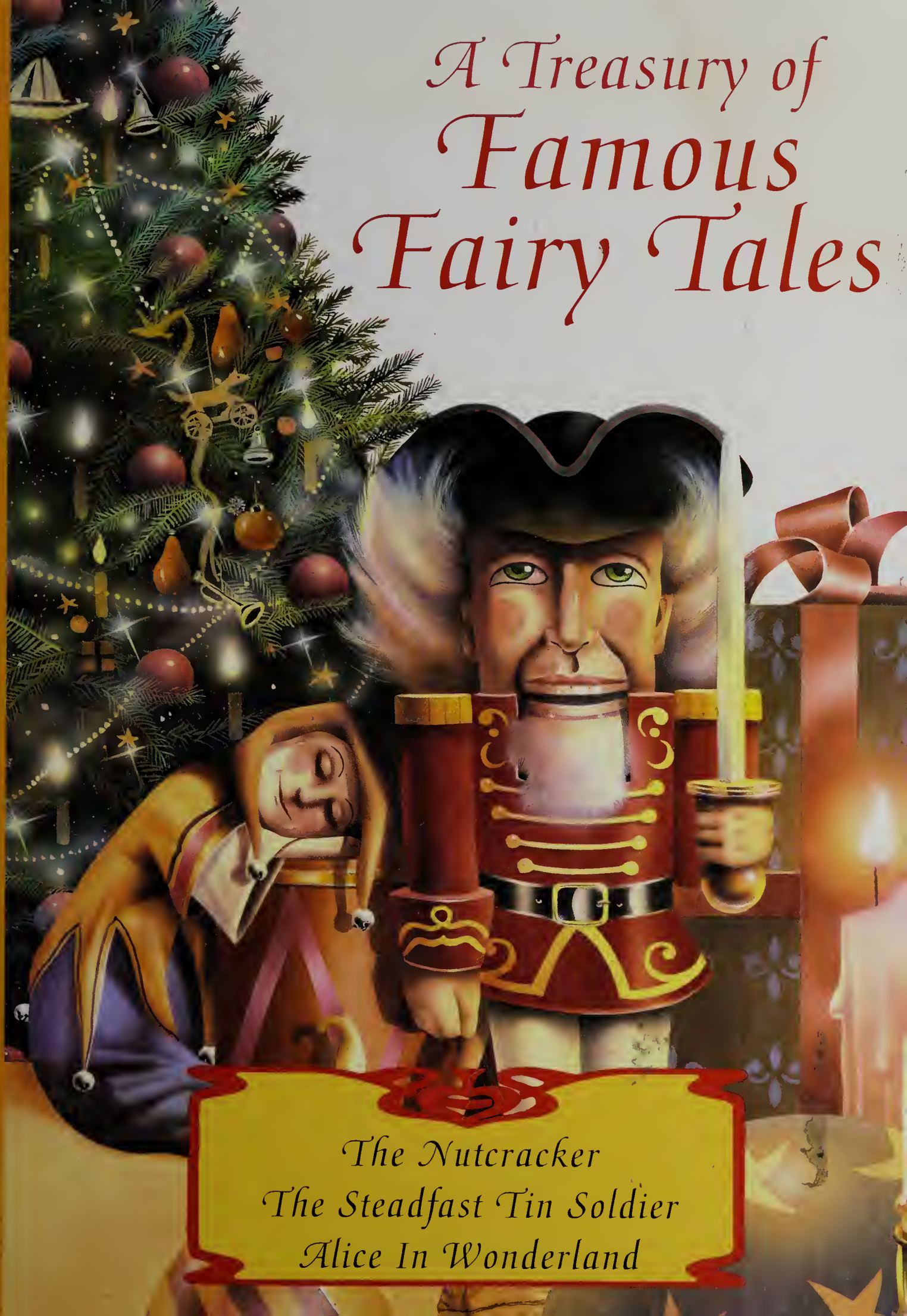
A Treasury of Famous Fairy Tales



The Nutcracker
The Steadfast Tin Soldier
Alice In Wonderland

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A Treasury Of Famous Fairy Tales

The Unicorn Publishing House
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The Nutcracker

Retold from the tale by
E.T.A. Hoffmann

Christmas Eve *had* arrived. The great Christmas tree bore apples of silver and gold, and all its branches were heavy with sugar almonds, bon-bons, and all sorts of delicious things to eat. Along its spreading branches were hundreds of tiny candles, glittering like stars, inviting the children to pluck its flowers and fruit.

The children looked on in wonder, for never before had there been so many beautiful and delightful presents awaiting their eager hands. Marie gazed upon the most beautiful dolls and toys imaginable. Some surrounded the base of the tree while others hung from its branches.

Fritz, her older brother, not content to merely gaze, set at once upon the lovely toys. In no time at all he was at work mustering his troops, a new squadron of hussars. Fritz wanted to whip the troops into shape quickly, so that they might defend the beautiful castle. The castle was a grand sight—a present from their Godpapa Drosselmeier. But *not* the only one.

Amid all the Christmas splendor Marie caught sight of a curious little man hanging quietly from one of the branches, as if patiently waiting his turn to be seen.

As Marie looked at the little man, she began to clearly see a sweet and kind nature in his odd little face. "Oh, Papa," Marie cried at last, "whose present is this little man to be?"

"Well," came the answer, "that little fellow is going to do plenty of good service for all of you." And her papa explained that he was named Nutcracker, for that is what he does best. Then he showed Marie. He took Nutcracker from the tree and lifted the end of the little man's cloak (which was really a handle). Nutcracker opened his mouth, displaying two rows of very white teeth. Then he placed a nut between the little man's teeth and—*crack, crack*—neatly broke the shell. Marie and Fritz clapped their hands with delight.

Fritz grabbed up Nutcracker, and immediately began to misbehave. As Marie watched in horror, Fritz began to stuff nut after nut into Nutcracker's mouth, often forcing nuts that were far too large for the little man to take, until at last—"*CRACK!*" Three teeth fell out of Nutcracker's mouth, and his lower jaw became loose and wobbly.

"Ah! my darling Nutcracker," Marie cried.

"Humph!" said Fritz. "Calls himself a nutcracker, and can't even give a decent bite."

Marie paid no attention to Fritz, and quickly gathered the little man's broken teeth. Taking a ribbon from her dress, she tied it gently around Nutcracker's injured chin. She then cradled Nutcracker in her arms, rocking him to and fro like a child, and whispering words of comfort. When Godpapa Drosselmeier saw the way Marie treated Nutcracker, he laughed at her and complained that she gave far too much attention to such an ugly little man. But Marie continued to soothe her wounded friend.

It was near midnight. Godpapa Drosselmeier had left, and the children were putting all their new toys away in the cupboard. Fritz had bedded down his troops and was ready to do the same for himself. Marie, however, felt there was still quite a bit to do in arranging her new dolls. She begged her parents for a few minutes more. Her parents consented, and the rest of the family went off to bed.

The clock struck midnight. But instead of a bell chime, the clock sounded a dreadful tone. *A warning*. Marie looked up, and saw that the great golden owl which sat on top had moved! The owl had stretched its catlike head and covered the whole of the clock with its wings. The great owl cried out:

"Clocks, clocks, stop chiming,
For behind the wall he's hiding;
Seven wicked heads spit their spite,
Fourteen eyes burn the night,
The Mouse-King awaits the twelve to strike,
When hordes of mice shall show their might."

In the next moment, the owl changed into Godpapa Drosselmeier, and Marie cried out: "Godpapa! Godpapa! Why are you up there? Don't frighten me so!" But there was no reply.

Then they came. Marie heard them before she saw them. She heard the sound of thousands of tiny little feet behind the walls. Marie's heart beat with terror as thousands of mice squeezed through the cracks. The mice crowded together. But the most terrifying thing of all came last—the Mouse-King. The Mouse-King was huge, with seven heads, and upon each head a crown. Each ugly head took its turn and faced the mouse-troop, squeaking out commands. The mouse-army moved forward. Marie fell back against the wall. She was about to scream when her eye caught sight of the cupboard. Every doll and toy soldier was climbing down to meet the mouse-army. And Nutcracker was at the lead. The *battle* had begun.

The fight was fierce. Nutcracker and the army of toys boldly advanced against the mousey horde. Marie watched as her brave Nutcracker fell upon the mouse-troop, delivering one deadly blow after another. But Nutcracker's army was outnumbered by the mice. Little by little, the toys began a retreat.

And then it happened. A clown stumbled, and the mice fell upon him at once. Seeing his comrade fall, Nutcracker bravely fought his way to the clown's side. Marie looked on in horror as Nutcracker was quickly cut off from the rest of the toys. The Mouse-King rushed at him, *squeaking* in triumph out of all his seven throats.

Marie could stand no more. "Oh! my poor Nutcracker!" she sobbed, and taking her left shoe off, she threw it as hard as she could into the mouse-pack, straight at their king.

In an instant *everything* vanished! Marie felt a stinging pain in her arm, and the room began to sway before her eyes. Then everything went black.

When Marie awoke she was lying in her little bed, and the sun was shining brightly through the window. "She's awake," a voice said, and Marie saw the figure of her mother by her bed.

"Oh, Mother!" whispered Marie. "Are all those horrid mice gone, and is Nutcracker safe?"

"Don't talk nonsense, Marie," answered her mother. "What have mice to do with Nutcracker? You must have fallen asleep while playing, and you fell into the cupboard. You cut your arm very badly. Thank heaven, I woke and missed you or you might well have bled to death." At that moment Godpapa Drosselmeier entered the room and came close by Marie's bed.

"Godpapa, how *nasty* you were!" cried Marie. "I saw you quite well sitting on the clock. Why didn't you help Nutcracker? Why didn't you help me? It's your fault I hurt my arm!"

"Why, Marie, what foolishness! How can you talk that way to your godpapa? I don't know what has gotten into you!" her mother scolded.

When Marie's mother left the room, Godpapa Drosselmeier turned to Marie, and said: "Don't be angry with me, Marie, because I didn't kill the Mouse-King. There is far more to this than you know." And he pulled Nutcracker from his pocket, with all his teeth back in their proper place. Marie brightened, and took Nutcracker in her arms.

"Now, let me tell you a story," Godpapa Drosselmeier began, "about how Nutcracker became so ugly. You must admit, Marie, that he is *far* from handsome. But it was not always so. Would you like to hear the story of Nutcracker and Princess Pirlipat?"

"Tell me, Godpapa," Marie cried. "Oh, do tell me!"

THE STORY OF THE HARD NUT

"Did you ever *see* anything so lovely as my little Pirlipat?" boasted the proud king of his new-born daughter. And indeed she was lovely. Princess Pirlipat had been born to a noble king and queen of a small but prosperous country. She brought such joy into the royal house!

One day the king decided a royal feast should be given in honor of his daughter, and that the duty of making the fine puddings and sausages should be undertaken by the queen herself. The queen set at once to her work, browning the pieces of fat that were so important to both dishes. But while she was busy a little voice came to her ears, saying: "Give me some of that fat! I am a *queen* as well as yourself; give it over."

The queen knew who was speaking. It was Dame Mouserink, queen of the mice. The queen was not one to deny a few morsels of browned fat. Dame Mouserink took morsel after morsel of the fine fat and left. But that was not the end of it. Next came her seven sons, then her uncles, then her aunts, then her cousins; all came to take their share. The queen could not stop them and soon found herself with only a little fat left with which to make her puddings and sausages. Far too little. The dishes were ruined, making the king furious. He ordered that all the mice in the palace be killed. Traps were set. First Dame Mouserink's seven sons were killed, then her uncles, then her aunts, and then her cousins. In rage and despair, Dame Mouserink fled. The royal court rejoiced. The queen, however, was very much afraid of what Dame Mouserink might do.

Late one evening, Dame Mouserink came. The queen of the mice cried an angry curse, saying: "My sons and my uncles, my cousins and my aunts, are no more. Have a care, lady, lest I bite *your* little princess in two! Have a care, I say!" And she vanished.

On that night, and for every night after, great precautions were taken to see to the princess's safety. Six nurses sat, with six cats, around Princess Pirlipat's cradle. They kept watch all night, waiting for Dame Mouserink to come. One night a cry arose from one of the nurses as she saw a hideous mouse, standing on its hind legs, upon the face of the princess! She sprang up with a scream of terror! Everyone dashed for Dame Mouserink, but it was too late! She was off and away through a crack in the floor. The noise woke Pirlipat, who cried terribly. "Heaven be thanked, she is still alive!" cried the nurses. But as they peered into the cradle and beheld the princess, moans of sorrow went up. For there lay not the beautiful blue-eyed child that they loved so dearly, but a horribly deformed thing. Pirlipat now had an enormous head and a little crumpled-up body. Green, wooden-like eyes stared out blankly, and her mouth had stretched across from one ear to the other! Dame Mouserink had her revenge. Sorrow spread through the land for poor Pirlipat. *What* could be done?

The Court Astronomer was called upon to discover a cure. He consulted the stars. To assist him he had a great friend by the name of Drosselmeier (who also happened to look just like Godpapa), and they were at work for three days and three nights before they had an answer. The cure seemed simple enough. To return the princess to her former beauty she must eat the sweet kernel of the *nut* Crackatook.

But there were problems. The Crackatook nut is the hardest nut in all the world. Moreover, it was essential that the nut be cracked, in the princess's presence, by the teeth of a young man whose beard had never known a razor. The young man must crack the nut and hand the kernel over to the princess, always keeping his eyes closed, and he could not open them again till he had taken seven steps backwards without stumbling. The two friends set off at once to find the nut.

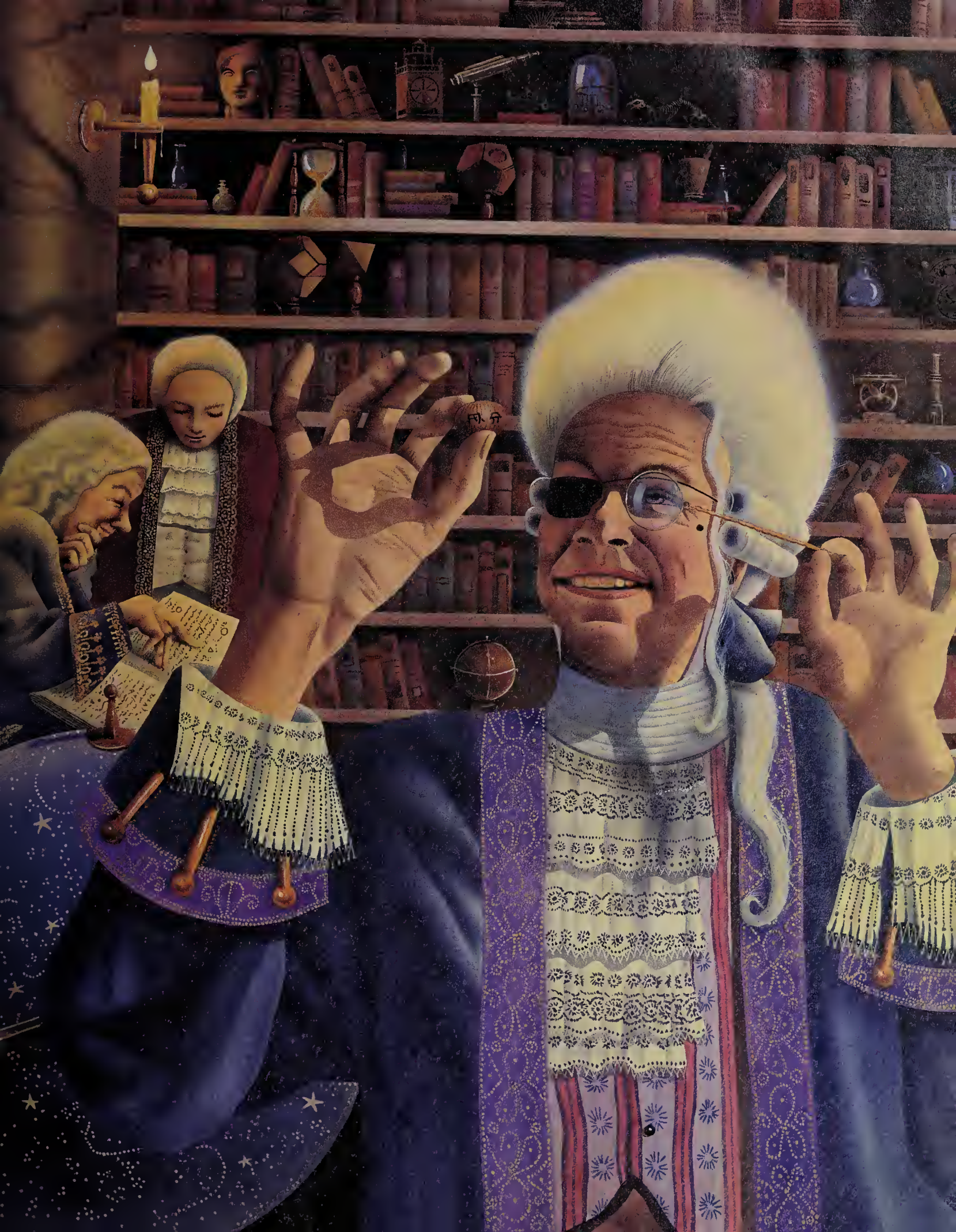
For twenty years they traveled in search of the nut, without even a clue as to where one lay hidden. They had many adventures, far too many to recount here, but at last they returned home—empty handed.

But when they walked through the door, Drosselmeier's cousin was waiting there for them, and ran up saying: "Oh my, you have been gone a long time, cousin! I have the nut! One was given to me many years ago as a present. Here!" And the cousin produced a small nut inscribed with Chinese charàcters.

"This is it! This is it!" cried the Astronomer. Now the two need only find the young man. But where? Again the cousin came to the rescue. "You must see my son! He is the one, I tell you!" And the young man was sent for at once.

He appeared at the door dressed in a beautiful red coat with gold trimmings, a sword by his side, and a fine wig with a pigtail. He was very good-looking, and often kept himself amused by cracking nuts for the young ladies in town, who called him "the handsome nutcracker."

"This is the very man!—we have him!—he is found!" they cried. They made for the palace at once. Many had tried over the years to cure the princess; but all had failed. The king proclaimed that the man who could lift Dame Mouserink's curse would have Princess Pirlipat as his bride. The handsome nutcracker stepped forward with the nut. Princess Pirlipat was impressed with the good-looking fellow. The young man closed his eyes and bit hard into the nut. "*CRACK!*" He gave the sweet kernel to Pirlipat and began to take the seven steps backwards. With each step the princess became more and more her beautiful self. But just as he was about to take the seventh step, Dame Mouserink came from hiding and ran under the poor fellow's foot. He stumbled. In the next instant the handsome nutcracker was *transformed.*



The young man lay there, looking exactly as the princess had before. Dame Mouserink lay there, too, having been crushed underfoot. She lifted her head up and said with a feeble voice: "Peep peep, woe's me, I cry!—since by the hard nut I must die.—But, brave young Nutcracker, I see—you soon must follow me.—My sweet young son, with sevenfold crown—will soon bring Master Cracker down.—His mother's death he will repay—so, Nutcracker, *beware* that day!" And she died.

When the princess, now quite beautiful, saw the ugly young man, she turned away in disgust. The king said he would never allow his daughter to marry such a horrid-looking fellow and banished Nutcracker from his kingdom. That *was* the hero's reward! And it is said that Nutcracker will always remain ugly until a beautiful girl gives her love to him—for only she shall see the true beauty that lies in his heart. But until that day, Nutcracker must be wary—for the Mouse-King seeks his revenge.

Thus ended Godpapa Drosselmeier's story.

Marie had to spend several days in bed while her injured arm healed. When she was finally allowed to leave her bed, Marie went straight to the cupboard to see Nutcracker. There he was, standing proud, alongside all the other toys.

Was Godpapa's story true? Was Nutcracker *really* under a spell? Or was the fight with the Mouse-King only a dream? Everything in the cupboard was quiet and still. Marie thought Princess Pirlipat a very nasty thing for not having loved Nutcracker after all he had suffered for her. Twilight fell, and Marie went back to bed.

Far into the night, as the moon shone bright, Marie was awakened by a curious noise. In one corner of the room a sound arose, as if small stones were being thrown, followed by the horrid noises of cheeping and squeaking. The *mice* had returned.

Marie sat up in bed. The noise suddenly stopped. Marie couldn't move a muscle—for she saw the king of the mice working himself out through a hole in the wall. Once inside, he ran about the room, came to a halt, then with one giant leap was up on the little table beside Marie's bed.

"Hee-hehee!" he cried. "Give me your candy! Do as I say! Out with your cakes, your sugar-sticks, your gingerbread! Don't pause to argue! For if you don't do as I say, I'll *chew* Nutcracker to pieces. Just see if I don't!" As the Mouse-King continued to squeak out his vile threats, Marie hurried to gather up candy. Placing the candy on the little table, Marie watched with horror as the seven greedy mouths set upon her sugary treats. As three of the Mouse-King's heads gnawed at the candy, the other four snarled at Marie, saying: "Give me your sugar treats; give them you must, or else I'll chew Nutcracker up into dust! Tee-hee hehee!" Then he was gone. It *wasn't* a dream. It was all true. Marie put her face in her pillow and wept.

Night after night the Mouse-King came. And night after night he demanded more and more from poor Marie. He ate all of her sugar toys, her cakes, her chocolate bon-bons, and her sugar-sticks. Nothing was left. Marie's father set traps to catch the mice; but the Mouse-King was far too clever for that.

One night Marie woke to find something cold and heavy climbing on her arm. The Mouse-King placed his wet nose near her ear, hissing: "Hee-he, my dear, I am here!—Happy to see me—to be *oh* so near!—You thought the trap might catch some prey!—Some mousey death to come this day?—No, my dear, that will not be!—The king of mice still runs free!" He demanded that she give over all her new dresses and all her new books, so that he might tear them to shreds. Then he jumped to the floor, saying he would soon return for what was his. Marie was beside herself with fright, and wept bitterly.

But in time Marie began to gather her dresses and books together for the Mouse-King. She just couldn't let him destroy Nutcracker. As she placed her precious things in a pile, a sound arose from outside her door. There was a rustling and a clanging-and suddenly there came a shrill "Squeak!" The king of the mice had returned, Marie thought. Everything was silent; but soon there came a gentle tapping at the door, and a soft voice called out: "Please open the door, my dear Marie. Don't be alarmed. It is I, Nutcracker, and I have good news."

Marie ran to open the door. There stood Nutcracker, with his sword covered with blood in his left hand, and a little wax candle in his right. When he saw Marie, he knelt down on one knee. With a gentle *bow* of his head, he placed before her the seven crowns of the Mouse-King.

"I have at long last defeated my enemy," Nutcracker began, "because you, Marie, gave me the strength to do so. I could not allow you to give up your most precious things to keep me from harm. Your courage has become *my* courage. And now, if you will let me, I would like to take you to a very special place."

They had only to walk into Marie's little closet to enter the world of Nutcracker. The first thing Marie noticed was that Nutcracker was almost her size. Had he grown or had she shrunk? They stood looking out across a lovely, sweet-scented meadow.

Nutcracker beckoned Marie to follow, and soon they found themselves in a most delightful forest. "This is known as Christmas Wood," said Nutcracker. The leaves and branches of the wood were made of gold leaf and glittered in the night sky. Silver tinsel hung down from the branches, piping a delicate tune as they *rustled* in the wind. Thousands of sparkling lights rose with the music, eager to join the dance.

Nutcracker clapped his little hands, and there appeared a number of tiny people, as white and delicate as pure sugar. They brought a golden chair, and invited Marie to sit. Then they performed a pretty ballet for her, moving as one to the music of the wood. When they had finished, Nutcracker took Marie by the hand and led her out of the forest.

"We must keep moving," Nutcracker said, "for there is a great deal I wish to show you before this night is through."

As they walked along, they saw many beautiful things. They passed the Honey River and the Orange Brook. They saw many small towns and villages; some made of lemon peels and almond shells, and even one made of pure chocolate. But at last they came to the shore of a beautiful lake, rosy-red and fragrant, a shining water on which shone silver waves that tossed to and fro. In between the falling crests glided snow-white swans, murmuring an *ancient* song. This was Lake Rosa.

There was a boat in the shape of a swan to meet them, pulled by seven shining dolphins. They departed. As they moved across the water the dolphins sang with silvery voices, sending streams of crystal water high in the air from their nostrils, which fell down in glittering, sparkling rainbows.

Marie was delighted by the vision before her, and bent over the boat to gaze at the rippling water below. There she saw a reflection. But it was not her face that looked up from the sweet water. It was the face of Princess Pirlipat!

Nutcracker sighed, and said: "Do not be alarmed, Marie; it is only *yourself*, always *your* own lovely face smiling up from the rosy waves." Marie was embarrassed, and sat back quickly. But as she looked up she saw the most beautiful sight of all. For there on the shore rose a magnificent castle made entirely of candy. This was Marzipan Castle. This was Nutcracker's home.

They arrived by a golden carriage to the castle steps. There they were greeted by pearl-headed pages whose garments were woven gems. They were led into a great hall where a banquet was being held. As they walked past the people who had gathered for the feast, each one turned and bowed. Nutcracker pointed to the end of the hall, where two beautiful thrones sat side by side. Nutcracker was speaking, but Marie couldn't understand him. Everything began to sway and blur before her eyes. She felt as if she were falling away—far, far away. And then came a crash and a tumble! Then *silence*.

Marie woke to find herself in her own bed! It was daylight, and her mother was standing at her bedside, saying: "Well, what a sleep you have had! Breakfast has been ready for ever so long." What had happened? Had she only dreamed of the Marzipan Castle? No! It *was* real! Nutcracker was real! Marie knew in her heart it was all true. But no one believed her. Not even Godpapa Drosselmeier would listen to her. She showed him the seven crowns of the Mouse-King, but still he denied everything! Why?

Years passed, but Marie still believed. Nutcracker had stood silent through the years, not even once uttering a word. One day, when Godpapa Drosselmeier was visiting, Marie took Nutcracker in her arms, and without even knowing quite what she was saying, she whispered softly: "Ah, my dear Nutcracker, if you *really* were alive, I shouldn't be like Princess Pirlipat and despise you. I would have loved you for giving all for my sake!"

Godpapa Drosselmeier turned to Marie and said "Nonsense," but she could clearly see the old man was smiling. Why, Godpapa looked as if he would burst open with joy at any moment!

The very next day a knock came at the door. It was Godpapa Drosselmeier. And with him was a very handsome young gentleman. His little face was red and white; he had on a beautiful red coat trimmed with gold lace and a sword by his side, and he wore his hair neatly back in a pigtail. He held in his hands a lovely bouquet of flowers, which he offered to Marie. Godpapa introduced the young man as his nephew, who had long been away. Too long.

When Marie and the young man were left to visit alone for a while, he spoke to her: "Ah, my beloved Marie, it is I, Nutcracker, whose life you *saved* here on this very spot!"

Marie was stunned, for she understood what her godpapa had told her so long ago. For within the cupboard were many fine dolls—but Nutcracker was gone!

"You see," the young man began, "that Nutcracker is no longer. For you were kind enough to say that you would not have despised me, as Princess Pirlipat did, if I had been turned ugly for your sake. I have ceased to be Nutcracker and have been returned to my former self. Because of you I live again!" And kneeling on one knee, with a gentle *bow* to his head, he asked her hand in marriage.

When a year and a day had passed, the marriage took place. And they say that he came and fetched her away in a golden coach, drawn by a silver horse, to the Marzipan Castle. There they reign, as king and queen, with *joy* forevermore.

The Steadfast Tin Soldier

Retold from the tale by
Hans Christian Andersen

There was once a troop of brave tin soldiers, twenty-five to be exact, all brothers, as they had all been made from the same tin spoon. Each little man had a gun that was firmly rested against his shoulder. They all wore the most splendid uniform of red and blue, with high-top cap, snug white gloves, and shiny black boots. For a long time they waited in readiness within the darkness of their tin lodging. Finally the day arrived when the lid was lifted, and the smiling face of a little boy peered down into the box. Clapping his hands with delight, he cried out, "Oh, look! Soldiers, tin soldiers!"

It was the little boy's birthday and the tin soldiers were his grandest present, so he wasted no time in setting them up. All of the soldiers were just exactly alike, with the exception of one, who differed from the rest in having only one leg. You see, he had been the last to be made, and before he could be finished the tin had simply run out. Nonetheless, he stood just as proudly and firmly on his one leg as the others did on two. In fact, this story is about this very same soldier's brave adventures.

The little boy had played with the soldiers all afternoon, drilling the troop and arranging them in formation in preparation to do battle—if need be. It felt good to be needed, and the tin soldier took pride in the fact that he performed his duties so honorably.

When the boy had finished instructing his troop, they were left on the table alongside many other wonderful toys. As the tin soldier began to look at the new world before him, he caught

sight of an elegant paper castle. This was something special indeed, for he could see right through the tiny windows into the finely furnished rooms. And there were little trees too, surrounding a small mirror, which served as a lake on which porcelain swans gently glided.

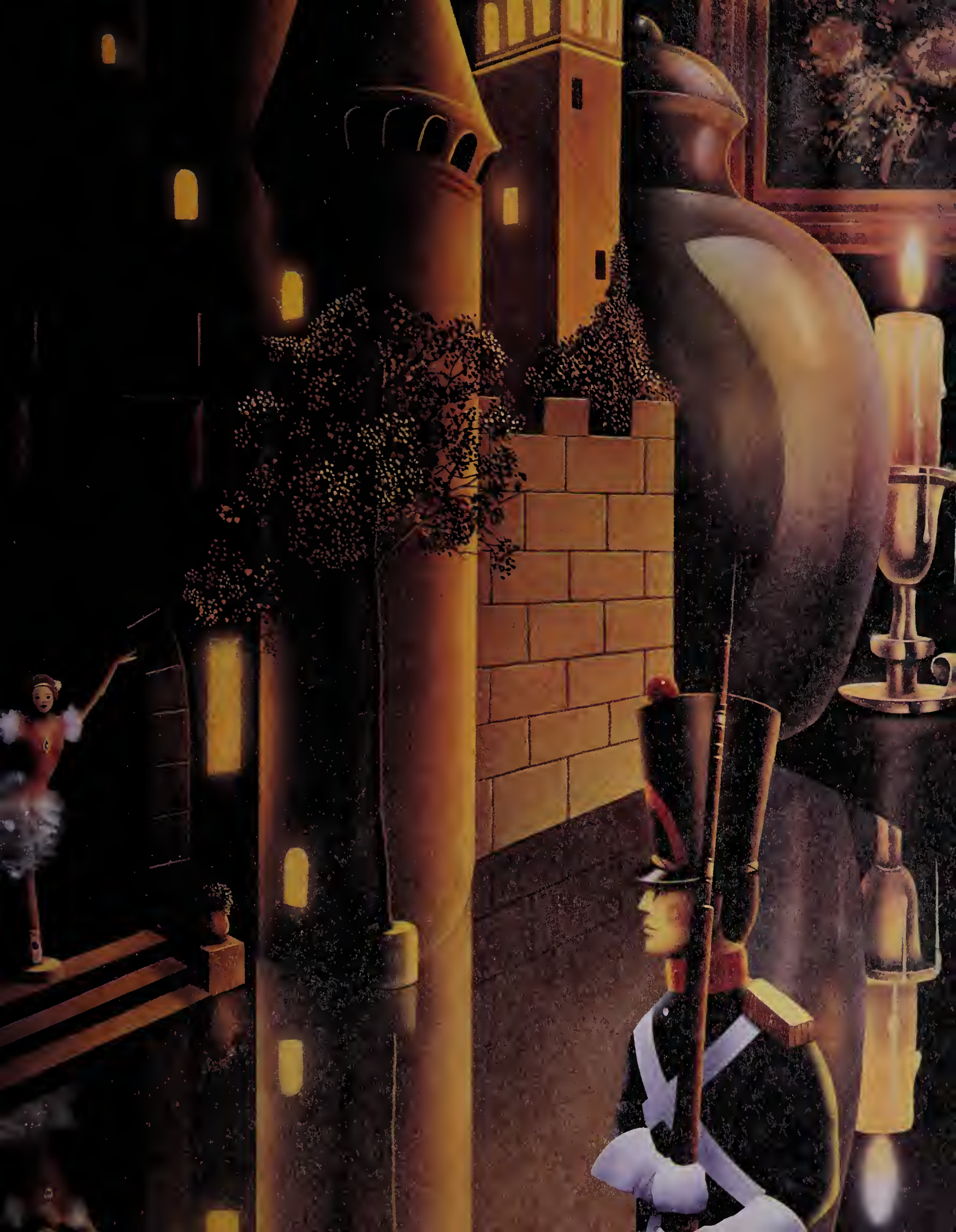
But the most wonderful thing of all, without question, was the pretty little maiden that stood just outside the door to the castle. She was made of paper too, yes, but she wore a dress of the very finest silk, dyed pink, with a beautiful spangle pinned gracefully around her neck. She was in a charming pose, both arms extended, one raised slightly higher than the other, with a gentle tilt like the stately dip of a swan's neck. For you see, she was a dancer. And in her dance she raised one of her legs so high that the tin soldier could see nothing of it, and he thought that she, too, must have but one leg.

If tin soldiers could blush, he certainly would have, for never had he seen such beauty as the

maiden that danced before him. "She would make a most excellent wife!" he thought; "but I am but a lowly soldier, living in a box, and with my twenty-four brothers at that! And look at her, living in that splendid palace and being so—so very beautiful! Still, there would be no harm in just trying to meet her."

When he was sure no one was around he moved behind a large snuffbox. From there he could watch the little dancer for hours. As night fell the other soldiers were put away in their box, and the family went off to bed.

Under the cover of night—the magic time—stirred to life the little boy's playthings. For night was the time when the toys would play. And play they did. They gave grand balls and passed many pleasant hours visiting one another. The hobbyhorses held races and the kites flew over the dance floor as nutcrackers bowed and asked the favor of a waltz from the pretty porcelain maids. The jack-in-the-box performed feats of juggling skill as a teddy bear and a windup



monkey kept time with a happy tune. The tin soldiers rustled about and banged on their box, for they wished to join the fun, but unhappily they found they were unable to lift the lid. The pet canary joined in too, and sang sweet verse to the chess set, as the kings and queens were closely attended by their courts. But the tin soldier and the dancer never moved once, she content to stand upon one tiptoe, and he to gaze upon her beauty as he lay behind the snuffbox.

As the moon shone full through the window, and the clock struck midnight, up came the lid to the snuffbox with a bang! But what rose out of the box was not a whirl of snuff. Oh, no! There came a-creeping a wicked black goblin, full of mischief in his little cold heart. The toys all fell back and shook with fright, for they knew what an evil devil he could be. But not the tin soldier; he stood brave and pretended to ignore the goblin's vile curses.

The goblin spoke in a shrill voice:

"Tin soldier! Be mindful of your ways,
And no more attention will you pay,
To the little maiden who dances so sweet.

"For if you persist to try and meet,
You'll find yourself trod under these feet,
And crushed like a harvest of fine
winter wheat.

"So forego all thoughts of your tin heart,
And return at once to the soldiers' box,
Or wicked curse and charm I'll work,
Upon your soul I'll now impart!"

So saying, the goblin waited for a reply, but the tin soldier held firm and said nothing. The goblin was furious. He puffed up his slimy frame and spit full, the loathsome wretch, then said:

"Ah! you just wait until tomorrow,
For misery on the wing is sure to follow!"

The goblin then slid back into the snuffbox, slamming the lid shut.

When morning arrived, the children got up to play and immediately placed the tin soldier on the windowsill. Now whether by goblin mischief or simply a gust of wind, it cannot be said, but the window flew open and the brave little soldier tumbled headlong down to the street. It was a terrific fall, but luckily, his bayonet stuck in a crack in the pavement, saving him from landing on his head. And though the children looked everywhere for him, nearly stepping on him at times, they were unable to see him. If only he had cried out, "Look here, over here I am!" then they would surely have found him.

Before long the sky grew dark and heavy. Gusts of wind kicked up dust and whirled it into the poor soldier's eyes. Then came a furious storm with pounding rain and clapping thunder. The brave soldier held fast, though doubtless he was scared. When the storm had passed, two young boys came along and one spied the toy. "Look there!" said one. "A tin soldier. Let's take him for a boat ride."

They took an old newspaper and folded it into the shape of a little boat; then, placing the tin soldier in the middle, they let it loose to sail down the gutter. The boys ran alongside, cheering and clapping as the boat went faster and faster. Oh, the waves began to thrash the boat left and right, and toss it to and fro. Up and down, up and down the boat would go on top of the waves. Then round and round, round and round as it whirled about in the current. The poor tin soldier was becoming quite dizzy and hoped he would not become seasick. Suddenly, the soldier found himself surrounded by darkness as the boat flew down into a street drain.

"Oh, curse that goblin! Just look at the mess he has gotten me into!" he said to himself. "Now where am I? If I only had the little dancer to share this ride with me, then I wouldn't care how dark it is or where I am going."

At that moment a giant water rat—and a very grumpy one at that, having lived all his life in

this dark tunnel—came waddling beside the little boat.

"Show us your pass, yesss—yesss—show us your pass," the fat rat whined.

The tin soldier didn't speak or move, but firmly gripped his gun in case trouble should arise. As the boat moved on, the rat ran alongside on the tunnel ledge, huffing furiously as he gave chase.

"You haven't a pass—you haven't a pass?" the rat asked. "No, of course you don't! Stop then! Stop! You must pay the toll if you don't have a pass, yesss—yesss—you must pay the toll! Oh, bother! Stop him, stop him!" As he flopped his fat belly along the ledge he shouted, actually beginning to squeal commands to the sticks and bits of straw strewn along the tunnel. "He hasn't paid the toll, nooo—nooo—he hasn't paid the toll! Attention! Stop the rude fellow, you must, yesss, you must! Oh, come back here youuu—scoundrel! Oh, do commme baaaack!!!" And as the last echoes rang along the tunnel walls, the thoroughly exhausted rat fell in a heap to have himself a good long cry.

The boat began to move faster and faster as the current gained speed. The water swirled around the tunnel and splashed up in the brave soldier's face. He could see daylight just up ahead. The end of the tunnel was near, but he felt a greater terror was about to begin. A monstrous roar filled the air, enough to strike fear in the bravest of hearts. The drain was emptying straight into a canal! The boat would be sent tumbling down into the torrent as if it were flying off a great waterfall!

There was no time to abandon ship, this the tin soldier knew, so he held himself firm and prepared for the worst. He would have no one say of him that he flinched in the face of danger—no indeed.

The boat flew out of the drain and crashed in the water below. It whirled about at a dizzying speed; then, little by little, it began to fill with water. The little paper boat was giving way under the flood, sinking further and further into the murky deep, until the tin soldier found himself

neck high in water. There was just time for one last look at the world around him before the water rose over his head, the paper boat gave way, and he began to sink to the bottom.

He wanted his last thoughts to be of the pretty little dancer, and he saw her twirling and whirling before him, dancing across the water with such grace and beauty! The dream brought to his ears a verse that rang deep and true:

"Forward! Forward! Brave soldier!
From death you cannot run.
Onward! Onward! Grave warrior!
Stop not till duty's done.

"And if you should fall, do not weep,
For honor's blessing now you keep,
And none but good shall you once reap,
When life's last light doth softly retreat."

But this brave fellow's adventures did not end here, for just when it seemed that things couldn't

get any worse, a large fish happened by and saw the little soldier sinking in the depths.

"Ahhh! what do we have here? A tasty treat, a meaty morsel, a delectable dish, a savory slice, a tantalizing tidbit, perhaps, hmmmmmmmm—just for moi?" the fish said to himself.

Now this fine fish hailed from France, and, like many from that noble land, was quite particular about what graced his stomach. He rose up from the bottom and sucked the little soldier up, swallowing him whole! And if it be known, the fish sorely regretted his action, finding the taste of toy men not at all to his liking. Well, the fish regarded his aching belly as a price one must pay in the never-ending quest for fine food.

The tin soldier, too, was most uncomfortable, being that it was so dark and cramped inside the fish's belly. Nevertheless, he was undaunted by this state of affairs, and gripped his gun tighter, waiting for his chance to escape.

For some time he could feel the movements of

the fish as it swam in the open waters, until one day the fish began to make violent jerks to and fro, then suddenly it became quite still. The next thing he knew a blinding light struck him, and a hand reached deep into the fish's belly and pulled him out to once again enjoy the sweet light of day.

"Well, by my word! A tin soldier!" a cook cried, quite amazed by her discovery.

You see, the fish in his search for fine food had bit just once too often and was now to be the dinner rather than the diner. He had been taken to market, sold, and was being prepared on the cutting board when the cook made her discovery.

The cook took the tin soldier into the parlor to show everyone the marvelous little man that had traveled in the belly of a fish. The tin soldier became very embarrassed, for he did not wish the world to know he had been held captive, and in such a ridiculous fashion! But wait! He knew this place. He was sure of it! Yes, he now saw that

these were the very same children, the very same toys, that he had left when he fell out of the window! And joy! There before him was the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancer, still standing on her one leg with her arms outstretched.

Ah! She too was unwavering in her life. Brave dancer! He was moved beyond words and ready to unleash a flood of joyful tears, but knew it would not be a fitting display for a soldier-at-arms. He looked at her and she at him, for what surely seemed like an eternity, and though they never spoke a word, they knew—they knew. But the world is full of goblin mischief and those who simply don't understand. For at that moment one of the boys grabbed the tin soldier, and, for no reason at all, tossed him into the fireplace.

The tin soldier blazed up in a beautiful flame, and whether he burned from the terrific heat of the fire, or from the warm love he felt for the dancer, he simply did not know or care. He saw

that all the wonderful colors of his uniform had now faded away. Had they gone because of his long and dangerous journey or had they been wiped away by his grief? He couldn't say.

He looked again at the little dancer and she looked at him. He felt his world melting away before him, but he tried his best to stand up straight and shoulder his gun as proudly as ever.

The door suddenly flew open and a gust of wind ran through the room. Then he saw the little dancer begin to move. Oh! She was twirling on her one leg, high up on her tiptoe. Twirling and twirling and twirling! Never had there been such a dance! Such beauty—such joy! Dance! Oh, dance!

The wind moaned softly and then caught up the little dancer and carried her fluttering across the room, fluttering straight into the fire, fluttering gently to the soldier's side. She went up in flame at once, and was gone! The tin soldier was by this time melted away into a small

tin lump.

When morning came and the maid started to clean away the ashes in the fireplace, she found a very strange thing indeed. At the bottom of the fireplace she found the soldier melted into the shape of a small tin heart, and deep inside the little heart, where no one would ever see, was the beautiful little spangle that the dancer had worn when she danced her glorious dance.

Alice In Wonderland

Adapted from the novel by
Lewis Carroll

Alice was getting very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and having nothing to do. She was considering in her own mind whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran by. There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" (Later it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural). But when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it. Burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and was just in time to see it pop down a large

rabbit-hole under the hedge. In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think before she found herself falling down what seemed to be a very deep well.

Down, down, down. Would the fall *never* end? "I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time?" she said aloud. "I must be getting somewhere near the center of the earth."

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice began talking again. "I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward. Dinah will miss me very much tonight, I should think!" (Dinah was her cat.) "I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah, my dear, I wish you were down here with me!" She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and saying to her very earnestly, "Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?" when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of sticks and

dry leaves, and the fall was over.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment. She looked up, but it was all dark overhead. Before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen.

There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked. She spied a little table with nothing on it but a tiny key. She tried the key in several doorlocks, and found it unlocked a small door about fifteen inches high. She peered through and saw a beautiful garden on the other side. "Oh how I wish I could shut up like a telescope. I think I could if I only knew how to begin." She then noticed a little bottle appeared on the table with the words "Drink Me" printed on a label. And she did just that. She neatly shrank to the size of ten inches. But oh! the key was on the table and the

DRINK ME

door had locked again! This time tiny cakes appeared. "If I eat these I might grow enough to reach the key." She did indeed grow, and grow, and *grow!* until her head bumped against the ceiling ten feet up. Poor Alice began to cry with fright. But to her delight, she soon began to shrink again,

and before long, she was *so* small that she found she was swimming in her own Pool of Tears! She met a Mouse who had also fallen into the Pool, along with a good many other animals. Alice quite forgot her fright now that she had found a friend. Together they swam out of the tunnel and joined the other animals on dry land.

The first question of course was, how to get dry

again. The animals gathered close together and began a serious debate on the matter. Alice found it quite natural talking with them, as if she had known them all her life.

At last the Mouse, who seemed to be a person of authority among them, called out, "Sit down, all of you, and listen to me! Ahem!" the Mouse said with an important air. "Are you all ready? Very well. This is the driest thing I know. Silence *if* you please! 'William the Conqueror, whose cause was favored by the pope, was soon submitted to by the English, who wanted leaders, and had been of late much accustomed to conquest and . . .'"

"No, no, no!" interrupted the Dodo. "We want *dry* clothes not *dry* conversation. We must hold a Caucus-Race."

"Well, I never!" said the Mouse, insulted.

The Dodo drew a circle on the ground and they began. There was no "One, two, three, and away," but rather they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to tell when the race was over. When they had been running for some time, and were all dry again, the Dodo announced that the race was ended.

"But *who* has won?" they all cried.

"*Everybody* has won, and *all* must have prizes!" the Dodo declared. Alice had enough candy to give each animal one piece. But what about Alice? The Dodo asked what else she had, and she gave him a thimble. Handing it back to her, he said, "We beg your acceptance of this elegant thimble." And they all cheered. Alice would have liked to have stayed with them, but when she *mentioned* her cat, Dinah, they all became frightened and ran away. With a heavy sigh, Alice walked away. Before long, she came to a little house with a brass plate labelled "W. RABBIT". She opened the door and went in.

No one was home, but upstairs she found another bottle labelled "Drink Me". Curious to see what might happen, she drank it all. "Oh! I wish I hadn't drank so much!" But it was *too* late. Alice *grew* till she filled the entire room! At that moment the Rabbit came home. Finding an enormous child in his room quite upset the old fellow. He went at once for help, and soon Alice found

herself being pelted with tiny stones. Bill, the Lizard, tried to go down the chimney, but Alice sent him flying with a little kick. She noticed that the stones had turned to tiny cakes, and after eating a few, she was small enough to run from the

house. Alice hadn't gone far, when she ran straight into an enormous Puppy with large round eyes. The Puppy barked and feebly stretched one paw out, trying to touch her.

"Poor *little* thing!" said Alice, in a coaxing tone, as she held a stick out for the Puppy. Alice was very frightened that the Puppy might be hungry, and she might well be his supper! Alice threw the stick as far as she could, and the Puppy happily bounded after it. Alice made quick her escape, and ran till she was very tired and out of breath.

"Oh dear!" Alice cried. "I'd nearly forgotten that I've got to grow up again! Let me see—how is it to be managed. I suppose I ought to eat or drink something; but the question is, what?"

Alice looked all round at the flowers and blades

of grass, but saw nothing suitable. Then she looked on top of a large mushroom, and her eyes immediately met those of a large Blue Caterpillar, that was sitting on top with its arms folded, quietly smoking a long hookah, and taking not the smallest notice of her or anything else for that matter.

The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last the Caterpillar said in a sleepy voice, "Who are *you?*"

"I hardly know, sir," Alice began, "just at present, for you *see* I have been changed several times since this morning."

"I don't *see*," said the Caterpillar.

"I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly, for being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."

"It isn't," the Caterpillar simply replied.

Alice felt a little angry at the Caterpillar for its *short* remarks, but she decided to try again: "And I can't remember things as I used to—such as the poem, let me see, *'You are old, Father William'*,

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said,
'And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?'"

"That is *not* said right," said the Caterpillar.

"Not *quite* right, I'm afraid," said Alice, meekly.

Then the Caterpillar climbed off the mushroom, but before he left, he turned to Alice and said, "One side will make you grow *taller*, and the other side will make you grow *smaller*." Then he left.

"One side of *what?*" Alice called after him.

"Of the mushroom," came the far off reply.

Alice broke bits of mushroom off and tried a little of each. One made her neck *soar* into the trees, frightening a pigeon, but finally she succeeded in bringing herself down to her usual height.

Leaving the woods, Alice saw a *curious* sight. At the door of a fine house, a Fish-Footman was knocking. Before long, a Frog-Footman answered, and accepted an invitation for his master.

Alice was *burning* with curiosity. She walked into the house and found a Duchess holding a baby that cried constantly, while a Cook threw pots and pans and plates at her. Seeing Alice, the Duchess threw the baby at her, saying, "Here! you hold her!"

Alice left with the baby, but she hadn't gone far

when it changed into a pig! She let the pig run off into the bushes. "Now, which way shall I go from here?" Alice said aloud. "Where do you *want* to go?" asked a Cheshire Cat perched up on a tree.

"I really don't care, Cheshire Puss, as long as I get *somewhere*," Alice explained.

"In that direction lives the March Hare, but he's mad. We are *all* mad here." And the Cat vanished.

Alice walked to the March Hare's house where

an odd-looking group were having a Tea-Party. There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March-Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was fast asleep between them, and the two were using it as a cushion to lean on as they talked over its head.

"No room! No room!" they cried out when they

saw Alice coming. "There's *plenty* of room!" said Alice, and she sat down in a large chair at the end.

"What day of the month is it?" the Hatter asked.

Alice considered a little, and then said, "The fourth." The Hatter looked at his watch and said, "Two days wrong!"

Alice looked at the curious timepiece, saying, "What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what hour it is."

"Why should it?" muttered the Hatter. "Does *your* watch tell *you* what year it is?"

"Of course not," replied Alice, "but that's because it stays the same year for such a very long time all together."

"Which is just the case with *mine*," he said.

"I don't know what you mean," said Alice.

"Of course you don't!" said the Hatter, tossing his head back. "I daresay you never spoke to Time! We quarrelled last March—just before *he* went mad, you know—" (pointing to the Hare), "it was a concert held by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing. Well I had hardly begun when the Queen jumped up and cried: 'He's murdering the Time! Off with his head!'"

"How dreadfully savage!" exclaimed Alice.

"And ever since that," the Hatter said sadly, "he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now."

"Is that the reason for all the tea-things about?"

"Yes, it's *always* tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things up between whiles."

"If you ask me," Alice said, "I don't think—"

"Then *you* shouldn't talk," said the Hatter.

This piece of rudeness was more than Alice could bear: she got up in great disgust and walked off. "It's the stupidest tea-party I ever saw!" Just as she said this, a tree opened up, revealing a tunnel.

Once more she found herself in the long hall. She took the key from the table and nibbled a bit of mushroom she had saved, till she was *tiny* again. Alice opened the little door and entered the garden, just in time to meet the King and Queen of Hearts.

There was quite a ruckus going on, and the Queen was shouting "Off with *their* heads! Off with their heads!" Alice soon discovered the reason. It seems three gardeners had mistakenly planted a *white* rose-tree, rather than a *red* one. Afraid of the Queen's anger, they had decided to paint the roses red before she found out. But now they had been caught in the act, and the Queen was *furious*.

When the Queen noticed Alice, she roared, "Who are you, child?"

"My name is Alice, so please your Majesty," said Alice very politely, but she added, to herself, "Why, they're only a pack of cards, after all. I needn't be afraid of them!"

"Can you play croquet?" shouted the Queen.

"Yes!" shouted Alice back, holding in a giggle.

"Come on, then!" roared the Queen, and Alice joined the procession, wondering very much what would happen next.

"Get to your places!" shouted the Queen like thunder, and people began running in all directions. Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in all her life. The grounds were covered with ridges and furrows; the balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets live flamingos, and the soldiers had to double themselves up to make the arches. The chief difficulty Alice found was in managing her flamingo. She succeeded in getting its body tucked away under her arm, but every time she tried to hit a hedgehog, it *twisted* its neck up and looked her in the face. It had such a puzzled expression on its face that Alice burst out laughing, and by the time she tried again, the hedgehog had unrolled itself and crawled away.

All the players had the same problem, and before long the game was ended. The Queen was shouting after everyone: "Off with their heads!" (which, of course, never happened to anyone) when the head of the Cheshire Cat *appeared* in the air. The Queen demanded the Cat be beheaded, but the executioner argued that unless there was a body to cut it off from, it couldn't be done. Amid the argument, Alice walked off toward a pair of very strange creatures who were sitting on rocks by the seashore.

One creature (with the head of an eagle) introduced himself as a Gryphon, and said, "This fellow is a Mock Turtle. Pay no mind to his tears. It's all his fancy, that: he has no sorrow, *really*. Come on!"

And the three walked to flat ground where the two creatures did a little dance for Alice. She clapped her hands with delight. Then, the Mock Turtle, who was still crying (why, no one ever knows: it's just *his* way), recited a poem for her:

I *passed* by his garden, and marked with one eye,
How the Owl and the Panther were sharing a pie:
The Panther took pie-crust, gravy, and meat,
And the Owl had the dish as its *share* of the treat.

The Mock Turtle had barely finished when a

trumpet sounded in the distance. The Gryphon cried, "Hurry!" and led Alice away by the hand. They arrived at the Court where an important trial *seemed* to be taking place. The White Rabbit blew the trumpet again and cried out: "First witness, come forward!" The Mad Hatter nervously approached. He was *so* afraid that he had shaken right out of his shoes and mistakenly bitten a piece out of his tea cup, thinking it his bread.

"Give your evidence," said the King, "and don't be nervous, or I'll have you executed on the spot."

This did not seem to encourage the witness at all. Shifting about from foot to foot, he began: "I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't begun my tea—not above a week or so—and what with the bread-and-butter getting so thin—and the twinkling of the tea—"

"The twinkling of *what?*" said the King.

"It *began* with the tea," the Hatter replied.

"Of course twinkling *begins* with a T!" said the King sharply. "What do you take me for? A dunce? Get on with it, will you!"

"I'm a poor man, your—" the Hatter began.

"And a *very* poor *speaker!* Begone!" the King said. It was then that Alice learned who the criminal was and the nature of the crime. It appeared

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